Assessment for Learning: Student Reflection Within the Writing Process

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Overview of the Process and Teacher Reflection

This project focused on student reflection in writing. Previous to this, I had always done student reflection in writing at the end of the writing process (after publishing). This rarely proved useful however, as there was little transfer from one piece of writing to the next.

For this project students were asked to reflect during the writing process (after drafting and before revising). This matches up with expectation 3.6 (preparing for revision) of the Ontario Language Curriculum.

This project was completed with a class of 35 grade six students. They had previously been taught all aspects of the writing process. The majority of the students were using the writing process on a daily basis.

Pre-assessment Task

Before any explicit teaching was done on reflection, all students were asked to complete a reflection sheet for their current piece of writing (news articles). This was then assessed according to the reflection rubric.

Using pre-assessment data

The pre-assessment data told me that the majority of the class was very weak in the skill of self-reflection (46% of students at level 1, 34 % of students at level 2). Due to this, it was decided that the process of teaching this skill would have to be very explicit, and at a slow pace.

The teaching strategies decided upon were:

- Modelling
- Building and use of anchor charts (posted in room)
- Exemplars (posted in room)
- Conferencing (student requested)

Whole class instruction – anchor charts, exemplars, modeling

These strategies were then carried out over a period of about a week.

Formative assessment

During the second week a quick formative assessment was done. This involved the students completing a self reflection sheet in their current piece of writing, which for most of them was a narrative. This took place over several days as students were working at different stages of the writing process.

Writing Reflection:

1. What do you see as your strengths in this piece of writing?
2. What are your next steps/needs?
3. How might this improve your writing?

This assessment revealed that although students were putting the effort into doing a good reflection, they still were not grasping the fact that they should be trying to identify their greatest strengths and next steps. For example a student might be identifying vocabulary as a next step when they really should be focusing on making their writing clearer (they didn't stick to the main idea).

It was decided that the class really needed more whole class instruction, with some very specific modeling tied into the point mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Potential Strengths, Next Steps and Needs
Sticking to the main idea
Organized according to form of writing
Word Choice
Proper tenses
Transition words
Engaging beginning or ending
High vocabulary

As well, I would be moving from just student requested conferences to teacher requested conferences, based on some of the needs from the assessment.

Finally, I decided that I would also use some student work and turn it into exemplars. This involved a whole class lesson taking a level 2 reflection and turning it into a level 3 or higher.

Whole class instruction – modeling and sharing of student work

The plan described above was carried out, and I began to sense that many of the students were beginning to have success.

Formative assessment

A couple weeks later another formative assessment (same format as the first) was carried out. This revealed that many students had experienced success and were now at a level three.

The assessment also allowed me to group students who were not having success together based on similar needs. These groups would be used for conferences, as my assessment was telling me that whole class instruction was no longer needed.

Individual and group conferencing

The final few weeks of the project were focused on conferencing with individual students and small groups of students with similar needs. This focused attention caused many of them to begin to have success.

Post Assessment
The students were then given a final assessment which was evaluated against the rubric. This revealed that 37% of the class was now at a level three or higher, compared to 14% at the start of the project.

At first glance these numbers were disappointing to me, as I was aiming for over 50%. However, after a more careful look at the numbers it was discovered that:

- 19 of 35 students went up a full level or more
- 13 of the remaining 16 students went up a half a level
- 3 students showed very little movement

Conclusion

Overall, the focus on self reflection within the writing process was a success. It is clear to me that this is a hard skill for students of this age to master, but many of them have taken several meaningful steps forward in becoming effective self-reflectors.

Self-Assessment Rubric

Criteria	1	2	3	4
Identification of Strengths and Needs	unable to identify a strength or need OR strength or need is vague and inappropriate/ inaccurate	identifies one or more appropriate strengths or needs in his/her writing; strength or need is vague/lacks specificity OR identifies one or more specific, but inappropriate/inaccurate strengths or needs	identifies one or more specific, appropriate strengths and needs in his/her writing	identifies one or more specific, appropriate, detailed strengths and needs in his/her writing
Reflection on Impact - How will this improve my writing.	reflection demonstrates little understanding how addressing next steps will impact/improve the writing	reflection demonstrates some understanding of how addressing next step will impact/improve the writing	reflection clearly demonstrates how addressing next step will impact/improve the writing	reflection thoroughly demonstrates how addressing next steps will impact/improve the writing
Application	next steps identified in the reflection are addressed in a limited way or are not addressed during the revision process	next steps identified in the reflection are partially addressed during the revision process	next steps identified in the reflection are generally addressed during the revision process	next steps identified in the reflection are fully addressed during the revision process

Classroom Results

Teacher: Mr. Barlow   Grade: 6
Curriculum Expectation(s) taught in the TLC Pathway:
Prewriting-Generating
Ideas

Name	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Nada			○	■ ▲
Brady			○ ▲	■
Michel	○	▲	■	
Dawson	○ ■ ▲			
Ben			○ ■ ▲	
Enan	○	■ ▲		
Brittany			○ ■ ▲	
Riley	○	■	▲	
Alisha		○ ■ ▲		
Sarah			○ ■ ▲	
Breanna		○ ■ ▲		
Abby		○	■ ▲	
McKean		○ ▲	■	
Eric		○ ▲	■	
Paige	○		■ ▲	
MacKenzie	○		■ ▲	
Liam		▲	■	
Ryan	○		■ ▲	
Elija	○	■ ▲		
Chase	▲	○ ■		
Tanner		■ ▲		
Brad		○ ▲	■	
Kelly	○	■ ▲		
Zach	○ ▲	■		
Lindon		○	■ ▲	
Justin	○	■ ▲		
Briana	○	■ ▲		
Shane		○	■ ▲	
Aidan		○ ▲	■	
Nicholai		○ ■ ▲		
Rawlica		○	■	▲
Caden	○	■ ▲		
Zoe	○	■ ▲		
Brandon	○	■ ▲		
Nathaniel	○ ▲	■		

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
Baseline = ⭕	16	12	5	0	14%
Percent	46%	34%	14%	0%	
Prediction = 🟩	1	16	16	2	51%
Percent	3%	46%	46%	6%	
Results = 🔺	4	18	11	2	37%
Percent	11%	51%	31%	6%	

Percent at or above grade level